



CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

TUESDAY, 25 APRIL 2023

1.00 PM COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, LEWES

MEMBERSHIP - Councillors Sam Adeniji, Bob Bowdler, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field (Chair), Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood, Matthew Milligan and Colin Swansborough

A G E N D A

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2023 (*Pages 3 - 8*)
2. Apologies for absence
3. Disclosure of Interests
Disclosure by all members present of personal interests in matters on the agenda, the nature of any interest and whether the member regards the interest as prejudicial under the terms of the Code of Conduct.
4. Urgent items
Notification of items which the Chair considers to be urgent and proposes to take at the end of the appropriate part of the agenda. Any members who wish to raise urgent items are asked, wherever possible, to notify the Chair before the start of the meeting. In so doing, they must state the special circumstances which they consider justify the matter being considered urgently.
5. Exclusion of Press and Public
To consider excluding the public and press from the meeting for the next two agenda items on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in Category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual.
6. Quarterly Registered Children's Homes Report (*Pages 9 - 54*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
7. Any other exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.
8. Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics (*Pages 55 - 58*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
9. Overview of new Ofsted sub judgement for Care Leavers (*Pages 59 - 66*)
Report by the Director of Children's Services.
10. Presentation on Post 18 education, employment and training support for care experienced young people in East Sussex
Verbal presentation by Children's Services Department.
11. Any other non-exempt items considered urgent by the Chair.

PHILIP BAKER
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17 April 2023

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CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL

MINUTES of a meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel held at Committee Room, County Hall, Lewes on 20 January 2023.

PRESENT Councillor Sam Adeniji, Councillor Bob Bowdler, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field, Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood and Matthew Milligan

ALSO PRESENT Kathy Marriott – Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care
Alison Jeffery – Director of Children’s Services
Fiona Lewis – Head of Service Looked After Children
Lisa Schrevel – Project Manager – Housing and Accommodation
Sally Carnie – Head of Looked After Service
Jill Nwokedi – Practice Manager
Tina Henderson – Founder Trustee, East Sussex Foster Care Association
Susanne Beesley – Chair, East Sussex Foster Care Association
Georgina Seligmann – Governance and Democracy Manager
Belinda Trunfull – Member Services

25. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 28 OCTOBER 2022

25.1 RESOLVED to agree as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 28 October 2022.

26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

26.1 Apologies were received from Councillor Colin Swansborough.

27. DISCLOSURE OF INTERESTS

27.1 Councillor Matthew Milligan declared a personal, non-prejudicial interest that a close family member is an East Sussex County Council Foster parent.

27.2 The panel noted that Councillors Sam Adeniji, Johnny Denis, Kathryn Field (Chair) and Sorrell Marlow-Eastwood are elected District and Borough Councillors.

28. URGENT ITEMS

28.1 There were no urgent items.

29. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

29.1 RESOLVED to exclude the public and press from the meeting for items 6 and 7 on the agenda (see minutes 30 and 31) on the grounds that if the public and press were present there would be disclosure to them of exempt information as specified in category 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12(A) of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended), namely information relating to any individual. It was considered that the public interest in maintaining the exception outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information.

30. QUARTERLY REGISTERED CHILDREN'S HOMES REPORT

30.1 The Panel considered Quarterly Registered Children's Home reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Brodrick House
- Homefield Cottage
- Hazel Lodge
- Silver Birches
- Lansdowne Secure Children's Home
- Acorns
- The Bungalow

30.2 The Panel considered Ofsted Inspection reports for the following Children's Homes:

- Acorns
- Hazel Lodge
- Brodrick House

30.3 The Panel welcomed the reports and received a verbal update from Fiona Lewis, Head of Service Looked After Children. The Panel heard how the homes coped with challenges during the Christmas period, however, despite this, the young people were able to enjoy the festive period.

30.4 The Panel were satisfied that the Home Managers had appropriate action plans in place to address the recommendations within the reports.

30.5 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report.

31. ANY OTHER EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

31.1 There were none.

32. LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN (LAC) STATISTICS

32.1 The Panel considered a report by the Director of Children's Services which provided an update on Looked After Children (LAC) statistics.

32.2 Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated the Panel on the latest position for Looked After Children in East Sussex. During the last quarter, there has been an increase of 24 children living in care, bringing the total to 654. Of this total, 358 children are in foster care (an increase of 6) with high levels remaining within in-house provision; 90 children were living with agency carers; 83 young people were living in supported housing options homes or hostels (an increase of 13) and 19 children were placed for adoption.

32.3 79 children were living with kinship foster carers (a decrease of 9); 28 living at home with their parents whilst remaining subject to a legal order (an increase of 7); 85 living in residential children's homes (an increase of 8) of which 20 living in East Sussex County Council (ESCC) children's homes and 65 placed in agency residential children's homes (an increase of 6).

32.4 2 children remain in a secure unit with 1 child placed in an external secure unit. There are no children remanded into custody. There are 77 unaccompanied asylum-seeking children and 104 asylum seeking young people who were care leavers (children over 18 years old). There has been a rise in Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children (UASC) which has led to significant pressure on the specialist UASC team, local services and accommodation. There are 341 children subject to Child Arrangement/Residence Orders (an increase of 1) and those subject to Special Guardianship orders decreased by 1 to 478.

32.5 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report and requested that the following information is included in future reports:

- Further information on the breakdown of looked after children placed with parents
- A summary of information regarding work undertaken to support unaccompanied asylum seekers

33. LANSDOWNE SECURE UNIT-TEMPORARY CLOSURE AND FORWARD PLAN

33.1 Kathy Marriott, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated the Panel on the temporary closure of Lansdowne Secure Children's Home. The home has been operating since 2013 providing placement for vulnerable children across the UK. It was extended in 2021 to provide an additional 5 beds and has consistently received good Ofsted reports in the past.

33.2 Significant difficulties recruiting and retaining staff as well as the absence of a registered manager from the end of January 2023 means that the County Council has made the difficult decision to temporarily close the home. There are currently 3 children at the home whose placements are all due to end in January. The pause in service will allow for a review and redesign of the staffing structure as well as develop an enhanced recruitment strategy to enable delivery of a resilient, viable and sustainable service in the future.

33.3 The panel noted the temporary closure of the home and discussed cost, bed capacity and staff recruitment. The panel heard that:

- According to the children's legislation, care homes are required to have a dedicated registered manager with statutory responsibilities, meaning that they cannot be licenced to run multiple homes
- The home is only able to accommodate a maximum of 8 - 10 beds due to the level of complex needs of the young people being accommodated
- Demand remains high and pricing structure will be reviewed
- Recruitment remains a challenge and appealing options will be considered to attract and retain staff

33.4 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report and requested to visit the home once it has reopened.

34. PLACEMENT SUFFICIENCY-NATIONAL CONTEXT

34.1 The Panel received a presentation from Kathy Marriot, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care outlining the Placement Sufficiency. The number of Looked After Children (LAC) has increased nationally, with higher numbers of LAC in all placement options other than adoption.

34.2 The service continues to experience pressure due to a lack of foster carers where recruitment has not been able to keep up with demand. Demand for emergency placements and a lack of supply can at times mean that Social Workers are having to care directly for LAC. The increase in demand means that at times unregulated provision is having to be utilised, with at times high cost of agency staff.

34.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the information within the presentation.

35. EAST SUSSEX SUFFICIENCY STRATEGY PRESENTATION

35.1 The Panel received a presentation from Lisa Schrevel, Project Manager - Housing and Accommodation.

35.2 The panel discussed housing options and asked for more information with regard to planned provisions. In response Lisa Schrevel informed the panel that the Local Authority (LA) is working with housing partners to increase housing options and looking into diversity provision for post 18-year-old as well as shared housing option. There is also ongoing work with Districts and Boroughs to set up a housing pilot scheme for 18 - 25-year-old care leavers.

35.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the information within the presentation.

36. KEY PRIORITIES IN RELATION TO CARE AND PLACEMENTS FROM OUR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

36.1 The Panel received an update from Jill Nwokedi, Practice Manager on the key priorities in relation to care and placements from children and young people. Jill Nwokedi updated that most young care leavers had fond memories of their time in care, and were able to recognise how supported they felt, however, results from the Bright Spots survey indicated that loneliness and isolation was a key issue for young care leavers living independently.

36.2 Sally Carnie, Head of Looked After Service informed that this information will be used to inform the next Sufficiency Strategy.

36.3 The Panel RESOLVED to note the report and agreed that it would be useful to meet the young people in person at a future meeting.

37. FOSTER CARERS ASSOCIATION REFLECTIONS ON DEMAND, CURRENT CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

37.1 The Panel received an update from Tina Henderson, Founder Trustee, East Sussex Foster Care Association and Susanne Beesley, Chair, East Sussex Foster Care Association who drew the Committee's attention to the following key areas informed by discussions with members of the Foster Care Association:

- Mental health support - early identification and mental health support for some children in care needed (relating to their experiences and trauma), can result in complex challenges being displayed by the children
- Education – some children with complex needs are not receiving full time education or operating at a reduced timetable due to lack of provision for additional support
- Clubs – positive that clubs prioritise waiting lists for children in care by allowing quick access to clubs such as Cadets, Scouts etc
- Cost of living – significant pressure is being felt especially around cost of energy and food with some carers not feeling financially recognised
- Recruitment – children whose families foster could themselves be future foster carers, therefore, it is essential that they are well looked after to maintain this future

recruitment-East Sussex runs some excellent activities and supports for children in fostering families

- Lifelong Links – welcome this programme, although needs more embedding across service.
- Respite – although there are respite options in place, current context is that demand is high, this can impact on carers' ability to make use of respite options

37.2 Tina Henderson and Susanne Beesley also updated that they felt that they had a good working relationship with the LA and felt supported. The training package on offer from the LA is excellent and placement support is a highly valued and appreciated service.

37.3 The updates were welcomed by the Panel Members who received a further update from Children's Services department who informed the panel of the following points:

- Relationship between ESCC foster carers and ESCC should be celebrated as a real strength with high quality support given
- Challenges around current cost of living pressures recognised, service seeks to ensure carers are supported in the best way possible within the resources available
- The service is committed to continue working together with foster carers to improve all areas with a view to implementing quick wins where possible

38. DISCUSSION-CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL RESPONSE TO SUFFICIENCY CHALLENGES AND PROPOSALS

38.1 Kathy Marriot, Assistant Director, Early Help and Social Care updated that the next thematic agenda will look to include topics on education, employment and training with a view to inviting partner agencies to the meeting.

39. ANY OTHER NON-EXEMPT ITEMS CONSIDERED URGENT BY THE CHAIR.

39.1 There were none.

The meeting ended at 12.32 pm.

Councillor Kathryn Field
Chair

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Agenda Item 6

By virtue of paragraph(s) 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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Report to: **Corporate Parenting Panel**

Date of meeting: **25 April 2023**

Title of Report: **Looked After Children (LAC) Statistics**

By: **Director of Children's Services**

Purpose of Report: **To update the Panel on changes in the last quarter.**

Recommendation:

The Corporate Parenting Panel is recommended to note the report.

1. Background information

Financial Appraisal

1.1 Services for Looked After Children are predominantly funded from the Children's Services base budget with some additional smaller funding streams supporting specific activity e.g., Virtual School activity from the Pupil Premium Grant and the Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children's grant from the Home Office.

2. Supporting information

2.1 Data found at appendix 1 is drawn as a snapshot on the last day of the month and some changes occur as data is cleansed. There has been an increase in the number of Looked After Children during the last quarter and on the last day of March 2023, there were 664 children in care. This is an increase of 10 children reported from the last quarter. The service remains very busy and the sufficiency of any placements either in-house, or in the independent sector, is extremely challenging. This is a national issue.

2.2 A total of 357 children were living in foster care at the end of March, a decrease of 1 since the last quarter. Of that number 260 were living with East Sussex County Council (ESCC) carers, which includes 8 children placed with foster carers who were also approved adopters as part of the Fostering for Adoption pathway, 95 children were living with agency carers and 2 with Other Local Authority Carers. In addition, 85 young people were living in supported housing options, homes or hostels, which has increased by 2 since the previous quarter. 16 children were placed for adoption.

2.3 At the end of the quarter 77 children were living with kinship foster carers, this has decreased by 2 since the previous period.

2.4 The number of children living at home with their parents whilst remaining subject to a legal order to ESCC, increased to 33. Planning for placements of this sort is always monitored rigorously to mitigate any risk factors. Agreement and authorisation for this type of placement is given at a senior level, unless it is court mandated when realistically ESCC has no choice in the matter.

2.5 At the end of March, the number of children living in regulated residential children's homes has increased from 85 to 92. Of that figure 21 children were living in ESCC children's homes and 71 were placed in external homes. Due to the challenges in sufficiency of foster care places ESCC has had to place an increasing number of younger children in residential provision, currently there are 25 children under the age of 11 in residential children's homes. All attempts are made to place children in our in-house provision prior to referring out to an agency placement, the searches for foster carers continue after a child is placed. There are rigorous negotiations on both quality and price when placement searches are made with external providers.

- 2.6 At the end of March there were no ESCC children placed in Secure Units.
- 2.7 At the end of March there was 1 child remanded into youth detention accommodation.
- 2.8 ESCC fully participates in the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) for Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children. The number of young people seeking asylum was 74 at the end of March. In addition, there were 110 Asylum Seeking young people who were Care Leavers during this period which in a significant increase from 92 the previous quarter.
- 2.9 The number of children subject to a Special Guardianship Order decreased by 1 to 478.
- 2.10 There were no complaints from Looked After Children during this period.

3. Conclusion

- 3.1 The Looked After Children's system has continued to be very pressurised during this period with a national and local shortage of care placements. It is to the credit of the fostering placement service that ESCC has been able to find suitable regulated placements for the majority of our Looked After Children.

ALISON JEFFERY
Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS
All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
None

Children's Services LAC Summary between 01/04/2022 and 31/03/2023

Placement Type	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
A4 - Placed for adoption with consent (under section 19 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
A5 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) with current foster carer	4	5	5	5	6	6	6	6	6	4	3	3
A6 - Placed for adoption with placement order (under section 21 of the 2002 Act) not with current foster carer	11	11	11	12	13	15	14	12	12	11	12	12
H5 - Unregistered Provider Supported Accommodation	63	64	70	70	63	69	72	88	85	87	90	85
K1 - Secure unit	1	1	2	2	2	2	2	3	3	2		
K2 - Homes and Hostels	75	77	77	76	77	76	81	81	82	82	89	90
P1 - Placed with own parents	22	23	23	22	20	20	22	27	29	31	32	33
P2 - Independent living											1	
R2 - NHS/Health Trust					1	1	1				1	1
R3 - Family centre or mother and baby unit											1	1
R5 - Young Offender Institution or prison	2	2	1					1		1	1	1
S1 - All Residential schools	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
U1 - Foster placement with relative or friend- long term fostering	11	11	12	12	12	12	14	14	14	14	14	13
U3 - Foster placement with relative or friend- not long term or FFA	74	72	72	76	78	72	70	65	66	63	64	64
U4 - Placement with other foster carer- long term fostering	154	149	146	142	141	135	134	129	127	126	125	125
U5 - Placement with other foster carer who is also an approved adopter- FFA	5	6	7	7	6	6	6	6	6	7	8	8
U6 - Placement with other foster carer - not long term or FFA	199	200	201	204	208	207	207	216	219	222	219	224
Z1 - Other placements								1		1		
Total	623	623	629	630	629	623	631	651	651	653	662	662

Immigration Status	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
Adult Asylum Seeker	9	9	9	9	9	6	6	7	3	2	1	
British Citizen	7	7	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8	8
Indefinite Leave to Remain in the UK (ILR)	2	2	2	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
Refugee Status	28	27	27	25	23	24	22	18	15	12	11	10
Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Child	23	23	25	25	28	31	36	51	56	57	66	63

	Apr 22	May 22	Jun 22	Jul 22	Aug 22	Sep 22	Oct 22	Nov 22	Dec 22	Jan 23	Feb 23	Mar 23
Child Arrangements Order/Residence Order S8(1)CA'89	342	342	342	342	341	340	340	340	341	341	341	342
der S14A CA 89	477	477	478	478	478	478	478	480	479	479	478	478

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Report to: Corporate Parenting Panel

Date of meeting: 25 April 2023

By: Director of Children's Services

Title: Briefing on Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and the new judgement on Care Leavers

Purpose: To provide a briefing on Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services and the new judgement on Care Leavers

RECOMMENDATION:

Members of the Corporate Parenting Panel are asked to note the update.

1 Background information

- 1.1 Ofsted's Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework was implemented in 2018. Ofsted have undertaken extensive research and consultation in relation to care leavers and have concluded that embedding the evaluation of the experiences and progress of care leavers within the wider 'children in care and care leavers' judgement has not maximised the profile of care leavers to the extent intended.
- 1.2 Ofsted have therefore introduced a new separate judgement for care leavers from January 2023. This presentation provides a briefing for the Corporate Parenting panel on the judgement.

2 Supporting information

- 2.1 The presentation is at Appendix 1.

3 Conclusion and reasons for recommendations

- 3.1 Members are asked to note the update.

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Director of Children's Services

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LOCAL MEMBERS

All

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

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Briefing on ILACS and the new judgement on the experiences and progress of care leavers

Kathy Marriott
Assistant Director,
Early Help and Children's Social care

Background

- The Inspection of Local Authority Children's Services (ILACS) framework was implemented by Ofsted in 2018. ILACS is a system of inspection which includes:
 - Local Authority sharing self evaluation.
 - Annual engagement meetings.
 - Focused visits that look at a specific area of service or cohort of children.
 - Standard or short inspections where we make judgements on a 4 - point scale.
 - East Sussex last ILACS was in 2018, we are expecting a short inspection in 2023.

ILACS judgements 2018-22

- Overall effectiveness.
- Experiences and progress of children in need of help and protection.
- Experiences of children in care and care leavers.
- Impact of leaders on social work practice with children and families.

Research and consultation

- Ofsted have undertaken extensive research and consultation with children, care experienced adults and families, and organisations representing the views of the care experienced people in 2021-2.
- Concluded that embedding their evaluation of the experiences and progress of care leavers within the wider ‘children in care and care leavers’ judgement has not maximised the profile of care leavers to the extent intended.
- Therefore Ofsted consulted on introducing a new separate judgement for care leavers from June 2022.
- Following the consultation the new judgement has been launched as of January 2023.

What will be covered in the new judgement for care leavers?

- Relationships and participation-including access to social and recreational opportunities and ability to influence the services they are offered.
- Health and emotional wellbeing.
- The local offer for care leavers.
- Making good decisions for care leavers.
- Helping and protecting care leavers.
- Learning and employment.
- Support into adulthood.

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